

Union and American.

Thursday, February 10th, 1876.

THE MYSTERIOUS PHOTOGRAPH.

BY GRACE THORNTON.

"Why will you not go with me to the Westons, Alfred?" asked Miss Annette Herbert of her brother, in an injured tone. "It is only a two hours' car ride to Thornton Station, and they will meet us there with the carriage; and we are sure to have a delightful time."

"You are more sanguine than I," replied her brother, incredulously. "I have spent a week at a country place before, and been insufferably bored myself, besides tiring my hostess heartily with my own stupidity."

"Oh, but I assure you the Westons are not in the least likely to be dull, and Ethel really is the dearest girl! Now, Alfred, just see her, that's all I ask. You pretended you had to go to New York, when she stopped here last winter, only because you have such an absurd prejudice against the sex."

"What an idea!" cried her brother, coloring in a very girlish way. "Who said I had a prejudice? I never heard of such a thing."

"Well, it seems very like it," persisted his sister. "You refuse to accept an invitation to the home of a charming family, who are very eager to see you, and can give no good reason for declining it."

That was just the point, though Alfred Herbert did not confess it to his sister. The very eagerness of the Westons, as indiscreetly confided to its object by Annette herself, was the strong ground of objection for him to stand it.

Now, Annette Herbert and Ethel Weston had been sworn friends in their school days, and were still indefatigable correspondents. In one of Annette's visits to The Glades—their beautiful country home—Ethel's brother Vincent had been present, and the wish of Ethel's heart was fulfilled by his immediately falling in love with her cherished school friend.

There was nothing necessary, therefore, to complete the happiness of both parties but that Alfred Herbert should prove equally vulnerable to Ethel's charms; and with that end in view, Annette had arranged the projected visit, sent Ethel her brother's photograph to prepare her to like him, and was all hopeful anticipation of the happy result, when the disappointed fellow flatly declared that he preferred to remain at home.

The truth was, Alfred suspected her, and with the morbidly shrinking ideas of a sensitively romantic mind, resented any such anticipated bestowal of his affections.

"True love must be untrammelled and free as air," he thought. "It must spring like a blush to the face of a modest girl; and any artificial feeling, got up to order, no more resembles the real emotion than a painted cheek does the natural glow of beauty."

These being his sentiments, he determinedly refused to accompany Annette to The Glades, and avoided all mention of her friend Ethel so resolutely that his sister was forced to call him an obdurate, hard-hearted fellow.

The elder Mr. Herbert was a prosperous merchant, with strong practical ideas. He had taken his son into his business house early, and at the age of twenty-five made him a partner, from which fact it can be inferred that Alfred's sentiments did not interfere with his business capacities. On the contrary, he was most energetic and attentive to his counting-house duties.

On the morning after he had disappointed his sister, he entered the store as usual, and took his place at the desk. As he was about to open the great ledger, his eye, glancing upward, rested for an instant on the picture of a fair young face, stuck in the wainscot opposite his desk.

It was pretty enough to attract his attention and to hold it, too; but as he was not alone in the counting-room, he carefully ab-

stained from betraying any marked interest or curiosity in the thing, and quietly pursued his work.

Presently, the two junior clerks left the room, and then he lost no time in detaching and examining the picture. It was the photograph of a singularly pretty girl, with a frank, trusting face, and large, tender-looking eyes.

She was evidently a blonde. Alfred was very dark-complexioned, and therefore admired his opposite.

"Who could she be?"

He was too careful to avoid the suspicion of sentimentalism to make any open inquiries, but instead of returning the picture to the place he had found it in, he put it between the leaves of the day-book, and looking at it from time to time, found his attention wandering from the business in hand for the first time in his life.

How could it have come there? Was the original a cousin of one of the young gentlemen, whom he had never before taken an interest in, but about whose family relations he now began to speculate with strong curiosity?

Will Jones and Tom Harris were each possessed of sisters, as he discovered after some roundabout questioning, and their sisters were considered "well enough looking" by the brothers themselves; but when he drew out of them a closer description of their beauties, it was very evident that neither of the Misses Jones, nor the solitary Miss Harris was the original of the photograph.

When his day's duties were over, Alfred transferred the picture from his ledger to his vest-pocket, taking it out for his private contemplation frequently on his way home.

"What lovely eyes!" said he to himself. "What a tender, exquisitely beautiful mouth, and how finely-turned and intellectual the head looks! I'll find her if I have to wander the whole world over."

Now this was a very ardent resolution; but as the photographer's name was on the back of the picture, and his gallery was in one of the principal streets of the city, it did not seem necessary to go so far.

"I will just call on Blank to begin with," thought the mysteriously enamored young man, "and perhaps he will recognize the picture and tell me who she is."

But he did not.

He was not in the gallery at the time it was taken, being absent from the city. His assistant was called, and thought he remembered the face, but not the name. He rather fancied that it was a stranger.

"A stranger! Then where am I to begin my search?" mused Alfred, disconsolately.

It had now become a serious matter with him; he was in love for the first time in his life, and with only the shadowy outline of a woman's face, of whose reality he knew absolutely nothing.

He grew absent-minded and moody, and Annette, on her return from The Glades, noticed at once the change in his manner and appearance.

"You've been applying yourself too closely to those stupid accounts of yours, Alfred," she said, reproachfully. "Had you gone with me, like a nice brother, you'd have enjoyed a charming visit, and come back in good spirits."

"I dare say," returned her brother, drily; "but, as I am not so vitally interested in my future brother-in-law, Captain Weston, I think I can manage to wait till Christmas week for a sight of him."

Annette blushed and tossed her head.

"I did not imagine you were very deeply interested in Frederic, or you would not have treated his sister's invitation so cavalierly," she said. "Of course I had to invent all imaginable excuses for your absence, and I beg you won't contradict them when she comes."

"Is she coming?" asked Alfred, with a stifled groan.

"Of course she's coming at Christmas, with Frederic, and I trust you will not permit your prejudice to ladies generally to make you rude to my friend, Alfred."

"Prejudice to ladies generally!" repeated Alfred.

And he cast up his eyes as he thought of his growing infatuation for one lady in particular; but he kept his secret, for he dreaded to meet want of sympathy and derision for his photograph-love.

Meantime, he acquitted himself of his business duties mechanically, leaving the counting-house as soon as closing hour came, and strolling hither and thither, like a wistful wanderer, in search of the original of the picture.

"If I don't meet her before Christmas, I will go to the nearest city and begin my search there," he concluded. "I will stay just long enough to meet Annette's future husband, and then start, on the plea of pressing business."

He continued to—"for what business can be more pressing than the effort to regain peace of mind, and lost rest and happiness?"

Having arrived at this conclusion, he went on wandering and searching in every direction, with as little success as hitherto, and his heart became fairly sick with hope delayed.

He had one chance left. He could produce the picture and ask them all down at the store if they had ever seen it before; but in so doing he would tacitly confess his secret, and such an acknowledgment would be most painful to him.

"Some one must have fastened it in the wainscoting, and whoever did that could tell me just where the picture came from," he said. "I'll risk placing it where I found it, and if any one notices it, I shall then find out who put it there."

So, with a trembling hand, he restored the little picture to its original place, opposite his desk, while no one was looking.

Presently, Tom Harris, spying it, cried out:

"Hello, here's that pretty picture again!"

Then, seeing Alfred look at him earnestly, the young man said:

"It's yours, isn't it, Mr. Herbert?"

"Why should you think so?" inquired Alfred, in a voice too anxious to be quite steady.

"Oh, I don't know, sir, except that Will Jones saw it fall out of your pocket, and stuck it up there a couple of months ago to attract your attention to your loss," responded the imperturbable Tom.

"Saw it fall out of my pocket?" exclaimed Alfred in astonishment, and quite forgetting his resolve to hide all feeling concerning it. "You must be mistaken, Tom. I never had a picture in my pocket in my life until—"

Here he broke off suddenly and looked confused.

"Oh, yes! Ask Will; he'll tell you," pursued Tom, positively. "It was the same day you asked him and me about our sisters. Don't you remember?"

Alfred was in a dream. To have the picture thus brought home to him was at once a surprise and mystery that he could not explain, and the more he thought of it the more puzzled and distracted he became.

"I will set out in search of her," he vowed. "I will make a pilgrimage that shall only end at her shrine. One day I will devote to Captain Weston and Annette, and then I will leave the city for an indefinite tour. My late close attention to business actually demands relaxation."

It was Christmas Eve, and he went home leisurely, for he was not unselfish enough to desire to feast his eyes with Annette's happiness while his own heart was so hungry, and he knew that Captain Weston was expected to arrive that day.

As he entered the hall it was twilight, and the warm glow within contrasted brilliantly with the gloom outside. A clear, sweet voice rang out on his ear in a burst of simple melody. Some one was singing in the parlor, and he stood entranced, listening eagerly to the touching harmony.

"It must be a stranger," he thought, for I never heard that voice before. Yet how familiar—how sweetly familiar it sounds! I could listen to it forever and not grow weary; it seems like the tone

that should belong to her!"

This emphasized pronoun meant the mysterious picture. The singing ceased; Annette heard his step, and rushing out, cried, delightedly: "Oh, I'm so glad you've come, Alfred—we wanted your tenor in a trio. Come in and see Frederic and his sister Ethel."

At the latter young lady's name, Alfred started back with the impatient, inward ejaculation: "Oh, there she is at last! Why couldn't I escape this stupid meeting?"

He felt a strong desire to do so even at this juncture by bolting up stairs, when Annette flung open the parlor-door, and displayed her lover, a fine looking fellow, and leaning over the piano the very indisputable original of her brother's cherished photograph!

To describe the young gentleman's feelings of his making this discovery would be impossible.

He bowed, in a confused and speechless manner, and then stood staring, with a crimson countenance, on the object of his secret adoration, his fruitless search.

"Why, what's the matter?" exclaimed Annette, laughing. "One would imagine that you two recognized in each other some long-sought friend."

Ethel was the first to speak.

"I confess, that Mr. Herbert's face is familiar to me, from the picture you left with us at your last visit, Annette," she said; and her voice was as tender and sweet as her lovely face.

"And I suppose yours is equally well known to Alfred, for I stuffed your photograph into his coat-pocket, the morning I left for The Glades, to console him for the loss of the pleasure he was missing!" cried Annette, mischievously.

"That accounts for it!" gasped Alfred, with an unspeakable sense of relief. "Then this is the real original, and no counterfeit?"

"Why, what are you talking about, Alfred?" exclaimed his sister.

And not waiting for him to explain or reply, she called Captain Weston's attention to some pretty immortelles she had arranged in a vase, at the other end of the room, leaving the two photographic friends to become actually acquainted.

A double wedding, before spring, bore witness to the success of her manoeuvre; and yet Alfred Herbert boasts that his love was spontaneous, and awakened first by a photograph.

NAPOLEON II. AND FANNY ELLS-LEH.

[N. Y. Sunday Democrat.]

The young Duke of Reichstadt, Napoleon II., delicate in health from his birth, had never seemed capable of feeling the least interest in life. Nothing could rouse him from a profound indifference and melancholy that penetrated his whole being. He distrusted everybody; was unwilling to go into society. It was thought that if his affections could be enlisted his mind would assert itself. A number of the fairest young women about the court were presented to him, but their charms, the blandishments, their conversation, their passion, real or feigned, moved him not a jot. He turned from them in weariness, and begged to be excused. Some sagacious functionary suggested that the ballet queen should be introduced to the forlorn youth in the guise of a peasant, in the hope that she, so accustomed to conquests, might conquer even him. The plan succeeded to a charm, and Louis fell in love with the seeming peasant girl. She pretended to reciprocate his love, never intimating that she was not ignorant of his birth and position.

Day after day they met in the gardens of the palace; then they extended their excursions on foot and in carriage, until a new spirit and a new life became his. He made her his confidante; he told her of his bitter past, of his despondency, of the hope and joy she had been the first to awaken in his nature; that she was the first one human being in all the world that he loved and cared for. In the midst of this idyllic life, the duke, being one day in the city, declined to visit the theatre. That evening he sat listless in the

box, hardly heeding the performance, scarcely noticing the ballet, until a little figure of brightness and beauty bounded on the scene. He was all eyes and animation at once. He had never imagined so marvellous a likeness to Marie. Could he be mistaken? He levelled his lorgnette again and again.

The vision of the lover could not be deceived. The truth and the whole truth soon flashed upon him. His Marie and everybody's Fanny were one and the same. The glass fell from his hand; the poor boy turned deadly pale, and might have swooned in his seat had he not been taken from the theatre and driven home almost insensible. The next morning the story was all over Vienna. Louis never saw Marie more. The little hope and faith he had had aroused; after that cruel trick he fell once more into himself, never to hope again. He did not live very long. The very night he died she was dancing in a crowded and applauding theater. She had forgotten all about him, but she still remembered the 20,000 florins that had been paid her for deceiving him.

SOBER SECOND THOUGHT.

Truth will be uppermost one time or another, like cork, though kept down in the water.

Truth is the ground of science, the center where in all things repose, and is the type of eternity.

"Is not life useful when it is happy?" asks the egotist. "Is not it sufficiently happy when it is useful?" asks the good man.

Men of the noblest dispositions think themselves happiest when others share their happiness with them.

The head truly enlightened will presently have a wonderful influence in purifying the heart, and the heart really affected with goodness will much conduce to the directing of the head.

Never believe to be right those who having but a piece of metal in their chests, would persuade you that to be cold is to be wise. Warmth is the vivifying influence of the universe, and the heart is the source of noble deeds.

Impatience, says Sterne is the principal cause of our irregularities and extravagances. I would sometimes have paid a guinea to be at some particular ball or assembly, and something has prevented my going there. After it was all over I would not give a shilling to have been there. I would have paid a crown any time for a venison ordinarly. But after having dined on beef or mutton, I would not give a penny to have had it venison.

When the stiffened body goes down into the silent tomb, sad and remorseless, says Theodore Parker, I feel there is no death for the man. That clod which yonder dust shall cover is not my brother. The dust goes to his place, man to his own. It is then I feel my immortality, I look through the grave into heaven. I ask no miracle, no proof, no reasoning for me. I am conscious of eternal life.

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